

title text field **63** can receive template identifier text, the checked out flag **63** can be reset. The root placeholder pointer field **64** will maintain the pointer to the root placeholder data header **42(n)(1)** associated with the tree of placeholders to be associated with the document template. Similarly, for each placeholder data header **42(n)(m_n)** in the template, the placeholder identifier field **70** can receive a template placeholder identifier value, the creation date field **71** can receive a value identifying the date on which the template was created, the placeholder description field **72** can receive placeholder identifier text, and the notecard pointer field **75** can receive a null value indicating that there are no notecards **30(c)** associated with the placeholder data header **42(n)(m_n)**. The sibling pointer **73** and child pointer field **74** will maintain the pointers to the sibling and child placeholders, or null values if to indicate that no sibling or child placeholder is associated with the respective placeholder, as in the It document on which the placeholder **42(n)(m_n)** is based, thereby to maintain the tree structure as among the placeholder data headers in the template.

An operator may make use of a template in connection with a project **20** by enabling the collaboration facilitation system server **111** to instantiate a copy of the template as a document for the project, providing values for the fields **61–63** of the document data header **41(n)** for the document, and fields **70–73** for the placeholder data header(s) **42(n)(m_n)** for the respective placeholders. That operator, and/or other operators who are authorized, can also add notecards in a manner described above, in which case, the notecard pointer fields **75** may receive pointers as described above. In addition, the document so created can be modified in the same way as documents created as described above, that is, by the addition or deletion of placeholders **22(n)(m_n)** or modifying the links between existing placeholders **22(n)(m_n)**.

The collaboration facilitation system **100** also provides arrangements for searching for information from headers **40,41(n)** and **42(n)(m_n)** associated with respective projects **20**, documents **21(n)**, placeholders **22(n)(m_n)**, as well as from notecard data structures **81(c)(v_c)** associated with respective notecards **30(c)**. In one embodiment, the collaboration facilitation system **100** also provides a keyword system in which an operator can assign keyword tags to projects, documents, and placeholders. Each keyword tag is in the form of a hierarchical category/property tuple, where the possible values for the categories and properties are predetermined and useful in connection with all projects maintained by the collaboration facilitation system **100**. The keyword tags assigned to a project **20** are inherited by its documents **21(n)**, placeholders **21(n)(m_n)** and notecards **30(c)** associated with those placeholders **21(n)(m_n)**. That is, each keyword tag assigned to a project **20** will also be deemed to have also been assigned to each of its documents **21(n)** and each of the placeholders **21(n)(m_n)** and associated notecards **30(c)** that are associated with those documents **21(n)**. Similarly, each keyword tag assigned to a document **21(n)** will also be deemed to have also been assigned to each of the placeholders **21(n)(m_n)** and associated notecards **30(c)** that are associated with the document **21(n)**. Using specific keyword tags, an operator can request the collaboration facilitation system server **111** provide information relating to projects **20**, documents **21(n)**, placeholders **22(n)(m_n)** and/or notecards **30(c)** associated with particular categories and properties.

It will be appreciated that a system in accordance with the invention can be constructed in whole or in part from special purpose hardware or a general purpose computer system, or

any combination thereof, any portion of which may be controlled by a suitable program. Any program may in whole or in part comprise part of or be stored on the system in a conventional manner, or it may in whole or in part be provided in to the system over a network or other mechanism for transferring information in a conventional manner. In addition, it will be appreciated that the system may be operated and/or otherwise controlled by means of information provided by an operator using operator input elements (not shown) which may be connected directly to the system or which may transfer the information to the system over a network or other mechanism for transferring information in a conventional manner.

The foregoing description has been limited to a specific embodiment of this invention. It will be apparent, however, that various variations and modifications may be made to the invention, with the attainment of some or all of the advantages of the invention. It is the object of the appended claims to cover these and such other variations and modifications as come within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A system for facilitating collaboration among a plurality of users in connection with generation of a document, the system comprising:

- A. a document information store configured to store document information relating to at least one document, the document information including both document structure information and document content information,
 - i. the document structure information describing document structural elements for said at least one document, document structural information for said at least one document comprises a plurality of placeholder nodes organized in a tree structure and said document content elements comprises notecards, each placeholder node being configured to have a pointer to one of said notecards,
 - ii. the document content information comprising document content elements associated with respective document structural elements;
- B. a user module associated with said users, at least one user module comprising:
 - i. a whiteboard display module configured to display a whiteboard to said user, the whiteboard selectively displaying document structure defined by the document structural elements for said at least one document and said document content information therefor;
 - ii. a document update module configured to enable said user to selectively update the document structure and said document content information therefor as displayed by said whiteboard display module; and
 - iii. an interface module configured to selectively enable the retrieval of document information for said at least one document and document content information as requested by said operator for display by said whiteboard display module and update of document information as stored in said document information store to be updated in response to updates received by said document update module.

2. A system as defined in claim **1** in which said document information store stores said document information relating to a plurality of documents.

3. A system as defined in claim **2** in which in which said document structure as defined by document structural information for each document comprises a plurality of place-